

NEWTON ABBOT URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
1941

To the Chairman and Members of the
Newton Abbot Urban District Council.

This report, the third of the war period, is drawn up in accordance with instructions contained in a Ministry of Health Circular dated 24th March, 1942, which directs that it shall be on much the same lines as the two previous wartime reports and confined to essential matters affecting public health and in particular those arising out of the war.

INFECTIOUS NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

The Diphtheria epidemic of which in 1940 there were 40 cases, continued throughout 1941 and finally ceased in the first week of December

The number of cases (56) is far beyond anything previously recorded.

The Scarlet Fever outbreak assumed epidemic proportions in May and continued till the end of the year.

Though of a mild type it caused great inconvenience and the expenditure of much time and money.

The 300 notified cases of measles was a small part of the epidemic of this disease which occurred throughout the country. In this District it ceased at the end of April.

Under present conditions it is practically impossible to exercise any effective control over the spread of infectious disease and if only for this reason it will be a good thing when the child population returns to normal proportions.

DISEASE	CASES	SENT TO	
		HOSPITAL	DEATHS.
Diphtheria	56	51	4
Scarlet Fever	57	50	0
Pneumonia	7	1	1
Erysipelas	8	0	0
Cerebro-spinal Fever	1	0	1
Puerperal pyrexia	1	1	0
Paratyphoid B.	1	1	0
Measles	300	0	0
Whooping Cough	26	0	1
Totals	457	104	7

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

The prevalence of this disease and the wireless broadcasts of the Ministry of Health offering free treatment to children of school age and under provided the necessary stimulus to the parents and immunisation commenced in January. The London County Council children, whom, it might have been expected, would have been done before they left London, also came forward in large numbers.

Of those who on July 31st., had completed the course of two doses each:-

Devon children under 5 - 290 or 59%
of the possible.

Devon children over 5 and under 12 -
1010 or 84% of the possible.

Evacuees under 5 - 35 or 17% of the
possible.

Evacuees over 5 and under 12 - 1064
or 85% of the possible.

The process started again in December when about 150 more were done and still continues at fortnightly intervals at the School Clinic. It is hoped that the parents of any children who have not yet been protected will avail themselves of this very beneficial service.

TUBERCULOSIS.

War conditions appear to have had little if any effect on the incidence of this disease.

Number of cases notified-Male 10
Female 4 Total 14

Number of deaths-Male 9, Female 8,
Total 17

Number of Tubercular persons resident
in the District at the end of the year
(not counting evacuees)-Male 94,
Female 71, Total 165.

This is a decrease of one on the
year before.

THE EVACUEES are still with us and have been reinforced by others from Bristol and Plymouth but owing to the almost complete cessation of bombing raids the numbers have dropped considerably. At the end of 1940 the evacuated popula-

tion was about 4,000, on December 31st last it was rather less than half that figure.

The children of course enjoy the same amenities and social services as the local children and Medical Inspection has shown that their health and general physical condition is of a high standard.

THE HOSTELS.

The two hostels for unbilleteable children in Newton Abbot and Bishopsteighton, maintained jointly by the two Councils, have functioned smoothly and effectively throughout the year. The average number in the two hostels is about 50.

THE SICK BAY HOSTEL in Forde Park, for contagious skin diseases, also serves the two Districts and latterly has admitted a good many cases from Teignmouth and Dawlish. It has 30 beds:-

In patients admitted during the year 229.

Comprising, Scabies 179, Impetigo 33,
 other conditions 17.

Outpatients admitted during the year 76.

Comprising, Scabies 73, Impetigo 3.

These three institutions are frequently visited.

CLEANSING STATION.

This institution, set up at the instigation of the Ministry of Health, for dealing with lice infested children, chiefly unaccompanied evacuees, has been

very useful and a boon to those foster mothers with large families of their own. Installed with the necessary equipment at the School Clinic in August, by the end of the year it had dealt with 142 cases.

SCHOOL CLINIC.

Crowded throughout the year. Altogether 7409 children were treated, an average of 77 per session, more than two thirds of whom were evacuees. This large number needed a large staff to deal with it, most of them voluntary workers and to these we tender our grateful thanks for doing what is for the most part a very unpleasant job of work.

INFANT WELFARE CENTRE.

Average weekly attendance:-

Devon Mothers	22,	Infants	18,	Toddlers	9.
Evacuee	"	20	"	16	" 6.

As regards other Public Health work there is little to record but it is worthy of note that the new Slaughter House after much difficulty and delay in obtaining the necessary material and equipment was finally completed in August. It is now the central and only slaughter house in the District and during the year dealt with 25007 animals

Of the routine inspections of pre-war times not very much could be done, the imposition of such duties as Salvage, supervision of Evacuees, Civil Defence, A.R.P. and all that they imply leaving little time for anything else. We venture to hope that it will not be

very long before all such unprofitable occupations will be of the past, gone and as far as possible forgotten.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Population (Mid year) 17,370.

<u>Live births</u>	M.	F.	Total.	
Legitimate	108	86	194) Birth rate 11.2 per 1,000
Illegitimate	8	8	16	
Average birth rate for last 10 years				11.2
England and Wales birth rate (1941)				14.2

<u>Still births.</u>				
Legitimate	5	4	9) Rate of 41 per 1000 bths
Illegitimate	-	-	-	

<u>Deaths</u>	101	127	228	Rate of 13.1 per 1,000
England and Wales death rate				12.9

Maternal Mortality Nil.

<u>Infantile Mortality.</u>				61.8
	4	9	13	rate of 66.2 per 1,000 live births.
England and Wales rate				59.

W.H. SCOTT.

Medical Officer of Health.